



Board of Directors Meeting September

Mon Sep 8, 2025 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM EDT

1. Call to Order

Smith called the meeting to order with minor changes to the agenda due to timing.

a. Roll Call

Attendance

Members

Remote: Diane Hauslein, Sara Mayer, Chris Schubert, Jennifer Dixon, Smith Lilly, Kristen Bagdasarian, Anna Marie Knipp, Sophia Fischer, James Nichols, Rachel Seifert, Christy Parker, Joan Todd, sandra currier, Clif Paulsen, Allison Deardorff

Absent: Malissa Welke, John Scheidt, Joe O'Brien, Allen Bosworth, Larry Hartsock, Julie Behrends Jones

b. Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made to adopt the agenda with the change of going into executive session first, since Chapman was available early. The agenda was adopted with the change with no objections or abstentions.

c. Minutes Approval

The minutes for the August meeting were accepted as presented with no objections or abstentions.

d. Declare Conflict of Interest(s)

A conflict of interest reminder was stated with members encouraged to declare any conflicts they feel they may have during the course of the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. President's Report

Smith announced his retirement from full-time training duties and transition to a consulting role at Mercer Springs Farm, while remaining on the board as immediate past president in an ex officio capacity. Smith also stated he was looking forward to a great convention in February and all of the great work to be done for the rest of the year.

3. Executive Director Report

a. Staffing Update

Sara reported that Michelle Brown has started as the new Events Coordinator, replacing a staff member who resigned, and provided updates on two interns working on registry tasks and marketing projects

b. KSF Update

Sara shared her successful meetings at the Kentucky State Fair, where she interviewed candidates for an open position and met with key donors and board members, including learning about her role on the County Fair Council.

4. Council Reports

a. Governance Council

The governance council discussion focused on two main proposals: changes to the nominating committee and the term structure for the board directors. The nominating committee proposal was approved, which will consist of 5 members with 2 elected by members and 3 selected by the board, ensuring transparency and proper qualifications. The board director term proposal was also discussed, with a motion to approve the change to 3 classes of 6 directors each serving 3-year terms, starting immediately upon election at the annual meeting. Sara explained that electronic voting is being considered, which may allow for proxy voting, though details are still being finalized.

b. Development Council

The development council reported on the successful launch of the Fran Crumpler Aspiring Judges Clinic Fund, which has raised over \$16,000 in three weeks. The Council also reported that the Founders Circle has already reached over 1 million dollars in pledges. Half of them are already paid for the year.

c. Competitions Council

The competitions council announced judges clinics scheduled for the UPHA Convention on January 15 and 16th, and at the ASHBA Convention on February 12 and 13th.

d. Programs Council

The programs council shared updates on youth events at fall horse shows such as St. Louis, Ocala, National Academy and the UPHA American Royal. The Youth Committee is reviewing the Youth Scholarship Applications.

e. Marketing Council

The marketing council reported progress on the Journal project, with Samantha leading efforts to streamline operations and automate sales through a new website. The affiliate marketing sub-group researched developed a plan to generate revenue through an industry-focused program with a projected goal of \$15,000 in revenue.

f. Youth Council

The Youth Council's activities were temporarily paused due to the Kentucky State Fair and school schedules.

g. Finance Council

The finance council discussed positive net income despite some softening trends, with the treasurer noting improved cash on hand due to Founders Circle donations and Fran Crumpler grants.

h. Registry Council

The registry council discussed upcoming prize program events at the All- American Horse Show, including a party on Wednesday and the sponsorship of classes.

5. Reports of Special Committees

a. Database Task Force

Database Migration Feasibility

The meeting focused on the database migration project from USEF servers, with Eric Lee presenting a 107-page feasibility study. Sara summarized the key points, explaining that the project involves moving not just the public website but also the old website, membership portal, administrative portal, and database itself. Eric clarified that the migration is urgent due to increased fees and the risk of losing access to the current environment, and Jennifer praised the detailed report's breakdown into non-technical terms. The group discussed the need to move the database by December, with Eric offering to help clarify any technical questions.

Database Migration and Website Challenges

The team discussed the current state of their database and website systems. Erik explained that all existing data access methods are currently in use for web products, but migration to a new host outside USEF is a priority. Sara shared that while some changes have been made to the USEF codebase without breaking it, there is no plan B for the administrative portal, which relies on 20-year-old code that is difficult to maintain and enhance. The team also discussed issues with the new website built by Vibrant Brands, which cost a significant amount in additional development work for portal functionality, resulting in data duplication and limited CMS capabilities. Erik clarified that while the old website could potentially be reactivated if needed, USEF has become less willing to support significant development efforts, particularly for the old site.

Technical Migration Feasibility Study

The discussion focused on reviewing a comprehensive feasibility study and recommendations for a technical migration and marketing site replacement project. The committee, led by Erik, presented their findings and approach, which was approved by the board with a budget allocated for tech initiatives this year. Sara emphasized that while the budget is in place, additional funding will be needed for future phases, and the committee agreed to keep the board informed of key milestones and potential issues during the migration process.

b. Membership & Volunteer Engagement Ad Hoc Committee

The board approved a "welcome back" campaign offering three months free membership for the 7,000 lapsed members.

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c. Facilities Ad Hoc Committee

The facilities committee provided an update on facility renovations, with preliminary drawings received and feedback incorporated.

d. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee reported that they have received 16 strong candidates for board positions, representing diverse backgrounds across the country.

e. Audit Committee

The audit committee reported that they are on track with a Q2 review and will begin 2024 audit planning in October.

6. Executive Session: Financial Review Update

The board adjourned to executive session.

7. Adjourn

The Board adjourned at 6:25 EST